

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information gathering system having terminals connected to a network and a center including servers connected to a network, for acquiring specific information from information input to the terminals:

wherein a keyword list is transmitted from the center to the terminals; and

the center receives from each of the terminals a number of information matching or associated with at least one keyword in the keyword list and the keyword corresponding to the number of the information, the information being input to each terminal by users, thereby acquiring the specific information.

2. The information gathering system according to claim 1, wherein the center receives information on characteristics of each of the users of the terminals together with the number and the corresponding keyword, obtained at said each of the terminals.

3. The information gathering system according to claim 1, wherein the center transmits to the terminals a period of acquiring the specific information by the center so as to cause the users to confirm the period.

4. The information gathering system according to claim 1,

wherein the center classifies the specific information received from the terminals according to characteristics of the users; and

the center transmits the information classified according to the characteristics of the users to the terminals when a part of the characteristics used for classification matches a part of characteristics of a specific user.

5. An information gathering method for acquiring specific information from information input to terminals in a system with the terminals and a center including servers connected to the terminals via a network, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting a keyword list from the center to the terminals;

specifying at least one or more keywords from the received keyword list in advance on the terminals;

obtaining by each of the terminals a number of information matching or associated with one of said at least one or more keywords from the information input to the terminals by users; and

transmitting the number of the information and the keyword corresponding to the number of the information, obtained at said each of the terminals, from said each of the terminals to the center, thereby acquiring the specific information by the center.

6. The information gathering method according to claim 5,

wherein the center receives information on characteristics of each of the users of the terminals together with the number and the corresponding keyword,

obtained at said each of the terminals, thereby acquiring the specific information.

7. The information gathering method according to claim 5,

wherein the center transmits a period of acquiring the specific information to the terminals; and

the terminals output the period received from the center on respective displays thereof so as to cause the users to confirm the period.

8. The information gathering method according to claim 5,

wherein the center classifies the specific information received from the terminals according to characteristics of the users; and

the center transmits the information classified according to the characteristics of the users to the terminals when a part of the characteristics used for classification matches a part of characteristics of a specific user.

9. A personal digital assistant used in an information gathering system with personal digital assistants and a center including servers connected to the personal digital assistants via a network, for acquiring specific information from information input to the personal digital assistants, the personal digital assistant comprising:

a receiving unit for receiving a keyword list

from the center;

a storage unit for storing the received keyword list;

a specifying unit for specifying at least one or more keywords in advance from the stored keyword list;

a counting unit for counting a number of information matching or associated with one of said at least one or more keywords in the information input by a user; and

a transmitting unit for transmitting to the center the number of the information and the keyword corresponding to the number of the information.

10. The personal digital assistant according to claim 9,

wherein information on characteristics of the user, held by the personal digital assistant is transmitted to the center together with the number and the corresponding keyword, obtained at the personal digital assistant.

11. The personal digital assistant according to claim 9,

wherein the receiving unit receives a period of acquiring the specific information from the center; and

the period received from the center is output on a display of the personal digital assistant.

12. The personal digital assistant according to

claim 9,

wherein the information input to the personal
assistant is voice data or text data.